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Approved For Release 2005/01/31 : CIA-RDP79M00467A002500080015-1  
DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

August 11th 1976

Brent:

Attached is a little update on the controversial BACKFIRE project.

At today's NFIB meeting I told the board that I was outraged by the leaks to Evans and Novak on the whole BACKFIRE project.

We had a request from Rumsfeld's office relayed by Jim Wade, saying that the Secretary wanted to do his own independent review of the CIA study/

Wade requested that CIA analysts give him a briefing about August 20th.

Inasmuch as CIA is having a final review that week, which will include a look by some outside experts, I told our people to tell Wade that we could not give the Secretary the briefing Wade wants until one week later.

I think Defense has the feeling we are going to try to rush something into the President without a full review by DOD and others in the community. This will not happen, but I don't want to disrupt our work any more.

( of passing interest- Wade's name appeared in that little memo on [redacted] and "pressure" that I showed you. I have not confirmed [redacted] of that allegation, however.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

11 AUG 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable Brent Scowcroft  
Assistant to the President for National  
Security Affairs

FROM: George Bush  
Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: CIA Analysis of Backfire

1. The CIA is completing a reanalysis of the Soviet  
Backfire bomber

The preliminary results indicate that the un-refueled radius of Backfire is between 1700 and 2000 nm resulting in a one-way range of the aircraft between 3300 and 3900 nm rather than the 2700 nm radius and 5100 nm range that CIA previously estimated. If these preliminary figures prove to be correct, to achieve any significant coverage of the US without refueling, Backfire would have to be used on one-way missions and would have to land in the US or Canada.

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2. Other members of the Intelligence Community have been kept advised of the progress and results of the study. In particular, the Air Force has been assessing the data and methodology. The first preliminary results of that examination have been sent to me by Major General George Keegan, Chief of Staff, Air Force Intelligence.

3. General Keegan suggests that there are a number of rather serious deficiencies which cast considerable doubt on the CIA findings. He believes that the CIA has selectively limited data to near a single source, adhered rigorously to a set of questionable assumptions defined to minimize the resulting performance, and did not consider technical, historical or logical precedents. He cites independent

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SUBJECT: CIA Analysis of Backfire

studies by Boeing, North American Rockwell, General Dynamics, the RAF and the USAF that agree without exception that the Backfire has an unrefueled intercontinental range capability. His message went into a variety of detail, some highly technical, on various specific points in which he was extremely critical of the assumptions, data, and the analysis behind the CIA study.

4. The CIA believes that General Keegan has misinterpreted or been misinformed about its analysis. The data base is much larger than that used in any prior Backfire study. The CIA has used all of the information previously available on Backfire plus

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All of the studies that General Keegan cites assumed that most of Backfire's available volume was reserved for fuel; that the thrust characteristics of the engines are those of an uprated supersonic transport engine; and that Backfire has optimum takeoff and cruise aerodynamics.

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The limited number of assumptions that CIA did make were subjected to rigorous checking and crosschecking to obtain reasonableness and balance. The CIA is currently finishing its analysis and conducting a sensitivity analysis on the assumptions it made. The several analyses by CIA, Air Force, etc., will be reviewed by the Weapons and Space Systems Intelligence Committee of the National Foreign Intelligence Board immediately after completion of the CIA study.

*lsl George Bush*

George Bush

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